



# ***MassWildlife News***

*Commonwealth of Massachusetts – Division of Fisheries and Wildlife*  
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## ***SARGENT AWARD PRESENTED TO SENATOR STEPHEN BREWER***

On Wednesday, November 12, 2014 the Massachusetts Fisheries and Wildlife Board presented Senator Stephen Brewer with the Governor Francis W. Sargent Conservation Award honoring his contributions to protection of the Commonwealth's natural resources. Brewer, of Barre, is the 11th recipient of the award established in 2000 by the Fisheries and Wildlife Board to honor the former governor and noted conservationist who was director of the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (DFW) from 1963-1964.

Mike Roche, Fisheries and Wildlife Board Secretary, spoke of Brewer, his lifelong friend. "Senator Brewer's career has had a profound impact on the ability of the DFW to manage fish and wildlife for the benefit of the public." Roche noted the Senator's substantial work guarding the rights of anglers in the Quabbin Reservoir.

Brewer received the award – a hand-carved wooden loon decoy created by Geoff Walker of Hank Walker Decoys in Newbury – at a ceremony held at the Otter River Sportsmen's Club in Templeton. "I don't think that Massachusetts Sportsmen will ever really know all that the Senator has done for them," said Fisheries and Wildlife Board Chairman George Darey as he presented Brewer with the prestigious award.

“Growing up in Barre, Senator Brewer developed an understanding and feeling for the environment that is embedded in his soul,” said Wayne MacCallum, DFW director. “When he speaks about the outdoors the depth of his love of the land is evident. The environmental protections that he has been instrumental in establishing are truly a legacy to future generations. He is a most deserving recipient of the Governor Sargent Conservation Award.”

Senator Brewer spent much of his 35 years in the Massachusetts Legislature advocating for conservation and the environment. The Senator’s many initiatives include the preservation of agricultural lands, support of dairy farmers, and the maintenance and enhancement of the Inland Fish and Game Fund.

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### ***IMPORTANT REMINDER FOR SHOTGUN DEER SEASON HUNTERS***

All deer harvested during shotgun season **MUST** be checked at a traditional checkstation. Online checking will **NOT** be available during this time (December 1 – 13, 2014). Reporting deer at checkstations during these two weeks allows biologists to collect valuable biological information needed for deer management. [Click here to find a checkstation.](#)

### ***2015 LICENSES GO ON SALE DECEMBER 1***

2015 hunting, sporting, freshwater fishing, and trapping licenses will be available for purchase starting Monday, December 1<sup>st</sup> at all license vendor locations, [MassWildlife District offices](#), the [Westborough Field Headquarters](#), and on the internet through the [MassFishHunt](#) system. Anyone 15 or older needs a license in order to fish or hunt. During December, it is possible to purchase either a 2014 or a 2015 license; therefore, license buyers should use care when selecting the year when making a purchase. Minors 15-17 years of age may not purchase hunting or sporting licenses online and must have certain documentation in their possession when making a license purchase at a MassWildlife District office or other license vendor location. Freshwater fishing licenses for minors ages 15-17 are free and can be obtained online. [Learn more about license purchasing requirements.](#)

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## ***JOIN THE 115TH CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT***

Make the Christmas Bird Count part of your seasonal outdoor tradition! From December 14, 2014 through January 5, 2015, birders in Massachusetts will participate in the longest-running citizen science survey in the world - the 115th Annual Christmas Bird Count (CBC). Bird lovers armed with binoculars, field guides, and checklists embark on this seasonal mission to collect data that is used by conservation biologists to study the long-term health and status of bird populations across North America. When combined with other surveys, the CBC provides a picture of how bird populations have changed over the past 115 years.

In Massachusetts, there are 34 geographic “[count circles](#)” where bird surveys occur. Each count circle is coordinated by a Count Compiler who works with teams of volunteer birders to ensure that beginning birders are grouped with more experienced birdwatchers. If your home is within the boundaries of a count circle, you can help by reporting the birds that visit your feeder during the CBC. If you are interested, contact your local Count Compiler to find out how you can participate. For more information on how to get involved in the CBC visit the [National Audubon website](#).

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## ***2014 DEER HUNT FOR PARAPLEGIC HUNTERS A SUCCESS***

This year the deer hunt for paraplegic sportsmen and sportswomen was held October 30 - November 1 at five sites statewide. Twenty-three hunters participated; six deer (all does) were taken. This translates to a 26% success rate for the hunt. Many hunters saw deer, contributing to a successful hunt experience.

“Being able to provide opportunities for paraplegic hunters is very gratifying and I have enjoyed overseeing the hunt for the last 14 years,” said MassWildlife Biologist Trina Moruzzi, Hunt Coordinator. She noted that volunteers are integral to the program and thanked them for their enthusiasm and commitment. Next year’s hunt will be held October 29 – 31, 2015. If you are a paraplegic sportsman or sportswoman interested in participating in the 2015 hunt, contact Trina Moruzzi at [trina.moruzzi@state.ma.us](mailto:trina.moruzzi@state.ma.us) or call (508) 389-6318 for more information.

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## ***MASSWILDLIFE HOSTS THREE HABITAT SITE WALKS THIS DECEMBER***

### **December 15 – Public Habitat Site Walk at the Farmington River WMA – Otis & Becket**

**10:00 A.M. - 11:30 A.M., Monday, December 15, 2014:** Join DFW Biologists for a walk through portions of a 59-acre New England cottontail habitat management project area that is scheduled for work this winter. Learn about work that DFW and other agencies and organizations are doing to create young forest habitat with high stem densities to conserve the New England cottontail, which has been in steep population decline for decades and is currently a candidate for listing under the federal Endangered Species Act. This project will benefit cottontail, as well as declining songbirds and gamebirds like American woodcock and ruffed grouse.

**Directions:** Meet at the [intersection of Becket Road and Lee-Westfield Road](#). Please wear sturdy boots and dress for cold weather.

### **December 18 – Public Habitat Site Walks at the Frances Crane WMA and the Quashnet Woods SR/WMA – Falmouth & Mashpee**

**10:00 A.M. - 2:00 P.M., Thursday, December 18, 2014:** Join DFW Biologists and Natural Heritage Restoration Ecologists to walk through portions of three project areas in close proximity to one another that are scheduled for habitat work this winter.

Projects included in the day's walk include:

1. A 120-acre pitch pine/scrub oak barrens restoration site in the portion of the Frances Crane WMA in Falmouth north of Rte. 151 that will benefit both state-listed rare species as well as game birds such as American Woodcock and Ruffed Grouse.
2. A portion of the Frances Crane WMA south of Rte. 151 to walk through portions of a 180-acre scrub oak restoration site that has seen previous tree clearing, mowing, invasive plant control, and prescribed burning where you learn about how state-listed species and game species have responded to previous management.
3. The third stop will be at the Quashnet Woods State Reservation/WMA in Mashpee to walk portions of an 80-acre New England cottontail habitat management project area. Learn about the work that DFW, DCR, and other agencies and organizations are doing to create young forest habitat with high stem densities to conserve the New England cottontail, which has been in steep population decline for decades and is currently a candidate for listing under the federal Endangered Species Act. This project will benefit cottontail, as well as declining songbirds and gamebirds like American woodcock and ruffed grouse.

**Directions:** Meet at the [DFW Field Trial Parking Area](#) at the Frances Crane WMA on the north side of Rte. 151 (between Hamilton Tree and the town softball field) at 10:00 A.M. Please wear sturdy boots and dress for cold weather.

**December 19 – Public Habitat Site Walk at the Montague Plains WMA – Montague**

**2:30 P.M. - 4:00 P.M., Friday, December 19, 2014:** Join DFW Biologists and Restoration Ecologists for a walk through portions of a 200-acre pitch pine/scrub oak restoration project area that is scheduled for work this winter, and see portions of the project area that were treated during the winter of 2013/2014. Learn about work that the DFW Biodiversity Initiative is doing through the new Key Sites effort to enhance habitat for multiple rare species in fire-adapted ecosystems like Montague Plains. The [Key Sites](#) effort seeks to protect the Commonwealth's existing investment in land acquisition by improving habitat for the species these lands were originally purchased to conserve, and at Montague Plains this involves partial tree clearing and mowing to reduce fuel loads, as well as establishment of fuel breaks to facilitate prescribed burning. In addition to benefiting rare species of moths, butterflies, and plants, this project also benefits declining songbirds like the Eastern towhee and brown thrasher, and gamebirds like American woodcock and ruffed grouse.

**Directions:** Meet on Old Northfield Road between Turners Falls Road and Lake Pleasant Road beneath the large powerline that crosses Old Northfield Road. ([Click here for a map](#)) Please wear sturdy boots and dress for cold weather.

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***GIVE A GIFT ON THE WILD SIDE!***

Now is the time of year to think about the outdoor or wildlife enthusiast on your holiday list! Consider the following wildlife-related gifts available from MassWildlife.

**MassWildlife Publications** A 2-year subscription to [Massachusetts Wildlife magazine](#) (\$10) delivers eight full-color issues of the Commonwealth's best wildlife publication. The magazine is packed with award-winning articles and photos on the environment, conservation, fishing, hunting, natural history and just about everything relating to the outdoors in Massachusetts. [Find this and other great publications at the gift section of our website.](#)

**2015 Licenses** The sportsman or sportswoman in your life will appreciate a 2015 hunting, fishing, or sporting license and any supplemental stamps they will need (available December 1).

License purchases support MassWildlife's fish and wildlife conservation, management, and habitat protection programs. Go to [MassFishHunt.org](http://MassFishHunt.org) to make a purchase.

**Charitable Donations** For the person who has everything, make a donation in his or her name to support one of the following funds. The [Wildlands Fund](#) is dedicated to acquiring and conserving important wildlife habitat open to wildlife-related recreation. Send the honoree's name with a check made out to "Comm. of MA - Wildlands Fund" to our Boston office: DFW, 251 Causeway St., Suite 400, Boston, MA 02114-2152. The [Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Fund](#) supports efforts to protect rare and endangered wildlife. A donation in the form of a check made out to "Comm. of MA - NHESP" can also be sent to the Boston office.

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### ***UPCOMING PUBLIC MEETINGS***

**December 11 – Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Advisory Committee Meeting, Westborough** – The meeting will be held on Thursday, December 11, 2014, at the DFW Field Headquarters, Richard Cronin Building, 1 Rabbit Hill Road, off North Drive in Westborough from 1:30-4:30 P.M.

**December 18 – Fisheries and Wildlife Board Meeting, Westborough** – The meeting will be held on Thursday, December 18, 2014, at 11:00 A.M., at the DFW Field Headquarters, Richard Cronin Building, 1 Rabbit Hill Road, off North Drive in Westborough.

A public hearing at 1:00 P.M. will follow the meeting to amend the rules and regulations relative to the hunting of black bear in Massachusetts. The public hearing notice and related draft regulations can be found [here](#).